

Questions and Answers

May 2004

Conservation Security Program

Watershed Selection

1. How many watersheds were chosen?

- A.** This year, we selected 18 watersheds from across the nation. Other watersheds will be selected each year, until landowners in every watershed have had a chance to participate. Every agricultural operation is in a watershed!

Q. How are watersheds selected?

- 2.** There were several criteria for selecting the watersheds to participate this year. The initial watersheds:

- Contain a wide variety of land uses (crops, rangeland, pasture, vineyards/orchards) and input intensities.
- Have high-priority resource issues to be addressed, including issues that meet their States priorities.
- Have a history of good land stewardship on the part of landowners.
- Have the technical tools necessary such as digitized soils information to streamline program implementation.

3. Why are you announcing the watersheds before the CSP rule has been published?

- A.** We want landowners in the selected watersheds to have as much time as possible to learn about CSP and get ready for the initial sign-up.

4. Why can't the entire nation be covered now?

- A.** There simply isn't enough money this year.

5. When can producers in the 18 watersheds apply to participate in CSP?

- A.** There will be an open season for applications, to be announced within the next few weeks by the Secretary of Agriculture.

6. What are the eligibility requirements beyond being in one of the selected watersheds?

- A.** This will be announced in the final rule and sign-up announcement.

7. What is the process for applying for CSP?

- A.**
1. Access the CSP workbook either online or by picking up a hard copy at the local USDA Service Center.
 2. Using the workbook, producers
 - Determine whether they meet the basic eligibility requirements
 - Document their stewardship work to date
 - Prepare a benchmark inventory documenting conservation treatments they have undertaken so far
 3. Submit the completed workbook to the Service Center during the sign-up period.

4. Meet with NRCS personnel to go over any additional documentation
5. NRCS determines the enrollment category for which the producer qualifies.
6. Finally, NRCS will select the categories to be funded for CSP contracts.

8. How many farms will be able to participate in the program this sign-up?

- A. We anticipate more than 10,000 acres to meet the eligibility requirements. We will be signing up to 8,000 contracts this year. Eventually we envision CSP being a nation-wide program available to all conservation stewards of the land.

For More Information

If you need more information about CSP, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at:
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/>



Visit USDA on the Web at:
<http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>

Note: This is not intended to be a definitive interpretation of farm legislation. Rather, it is preliminary and may change as USDA develops implementing policies and procedures. Please check back for updates.